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Stuart Glover

Queensland Review / Volume 18 / Issue 02 / July 2011, pp 190 - 206

DOI: 10.1375/qv.18.2.190, Published online: 23 August 2012

Link to this article: http://journals.cambridge.org/abstract_S1321816600000192

How to cite this article:

Stuart Glover (2011). Revisiting the Cultural Policy Moment: Queensland Cultural Policy from Goss to Bligh. Queensland Review, 18, pp 190-206 doi:10.1375/qv.18.2.190

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Revisiting the Cultural Policy Moment: Queensland Cultural Policy from Goss to Bligh

Stuart Glover

An account of cultural policy-making in Queensland since the election of the Goss Labor government in 1989 requires revisiting the rise and fall of what Stevenson (2000) has called the ‘cultural policy moment’ in Australia.

This period, from the early 1990s to the early 2000s, was characterised by political and scholarly interest in the civic and symbolic utility of culture, and in the outcomes achieved through its management. The cultural policy moment was produced simultaneously within government, the cultural sector and the academy. Within government, it was characterised by a new and highly visible interest in managing culture and (through it) the citizenry (O’Regan 2002). Within the academy, the cultural policy project was raised by Tim Rowse in *Arguing the Arts* (1985) and developed by the Institute for Cultural Policy Studies at Griffith University through the work of Ian Hunter, Tony Bennett, Toby Miller, Colin Mercer, Jenny Craik, Tom O’Regan and Gay Hawkins in the late 1980s and early 1990s. Stuart Cunningham’s *Framing Culture* (1992) focused existing debate within Australian cultural studies over the place of policy-based approaches within the discipline.

In Queensland, the cultural policy moment took its own particular form. This article rehearses a history of cultural policy-making in Queensland since 1989, but gives particular emphasis to the cultural policy moment as a failed project, in which the rhetoric and ambitions of cultural policy exceeded the policy tools that cultural studies scholars and cultural bureaucrats could put into play. This history can be seen as five overlapping stages.

First, the election of the Goss government in December 1989 brought its own impetus for cultural renewal and transformation — both connected to and distinct from wider but concurrent developments in cultural policy discourse. The first Goss government launched into the review and remaking of arts policy as an immediate but remedial task. This led to a reformation of policy, of policy-making processes and of the bureaucratic arrangements for arts delivery.

Second, the period from 1992 through to 1996 marked the rise and the high point of the cultural policy moment with a mutual concern for cultural policy within government and the academy, particularly the discursive and symbolic utility of cultural policy and a concern for the overall category ‘culture’. Here, the second and third Goss governments were in lockstep with the cultural policy

work undertaken by the Keating government, by other Labor states and within the academy.

Third, within the decade-long cultural policy moment there was, for Queensland at least, something of a cultural policy hiatus during the short National Party–Liberal Party Coalition government of 1997–99. This lacuna was mirrored at the federal level by the Howard government’s repudiation of the cultural policy work of the Keating government after its election in 1996.

Fourth, this article explicates the decline of the cultural policy moment in Queensland through a case study of the development of a failed discussion paper, *Building the Future*, a draft state government cultural policy statement that I prepared as an external consultant for Arts Queensland in 2000. The draft statement helped introduce a number of concepts that were taken up in the *Creative Queensland* policy statement of October 2002 and thereafter: the concern with creative industries; whole-of-government cultural policy attempts; and the repositioning of Arts Queensland as a service agency to other potential cultural funding bodies within government. Although the churn of policy work undertaken generated cultural policy discussion within government, the document could never achieve its whole-of-government ambitions. In some senses, the failure of this exercise marked the beginning of the end for the cultural policy moment in Queensland.

As occurs with other ‘insider’ accounts by Stafford (see Anderson 1993) and Macdonnell (1992), the case study presented here is a somewhat ‘invested’ account. It privileges my own viewpoint as a policy worker, and resembles not so much a conventional analysis but something closer to the accounts that have become familiar through contemporary practice-based research, where the exegesis provides a ‘research framework: the key questions, the theories, the disciplinary and wider context, of the project’ (Fletcher and Mann 2004, p. 6).

In its focus on the state, this case study is offered as a counterweight to cultural policy accounts that tend to emphasise the national or the transnational. State government cultural policy-making — and accounts of it — operate at a secondary level within most concepts of the framework of cultural policy. In Australian cultural policy studies, this is particularly so because of the importance of the nation as a concept around which to organise the political interests of Australian cultural studies as an oppositional discipline (Turner 1993). However, state government arts bureaucracies have grown in policy stature since the establishment of the Australia Council, and particularly during the Howard government years (1996–2007), due in part to the absence of or resistance to overt policy frameworks within conservative governments during this period. The Howard government made some major reforms in the high arts through (for example) the 1999 Nugent review of the performing arts (*Securing the Future*), the 2002 Myer review (*Report of the Contemporary Visual Arts and Craft Inquiry*) and the 2005 Strong review of orchestras (*A New Era*); the tenures of state Labor governments are marked by policy rhetoric even when the deliverables do not differ much from those offered by conservative administrations (Craik 2007).

In only a few instances have Queensland case studies provided a focus for cultural policy studies, most obviously *Culture and Policy*’s 1993 special issue on Queensland. Jennifer Craik, as editor of the journal issue, saw its importance as

capturing the role of reformist policy in the cultural transformation of Queensland and in documenting the ‘implementation of cultural policy and the linkages between different sectors of the policy community’ (1993, p. 7). But having noted the limited accounts of Queensland cultural policy, this article stands alongside the considerable literature that has been generated around the idea of Queensland as a changed state and Brisbane as a changed city (see Glover and Cunningham 2003). As Craik states, the narratives of Queensland cultural policy and cultural change are necessarily entwined, even if not always seen to be so (Craik 1993, p. 7).

Fifth, since 2004 there has been an effort to ground cultural policy work again within the practices of contemporary government. In this period, Arts Queensland has sought to rebuild credibility through a renewed emphasis on consultation with the sector and the clear articulation of strategy. The period since 2009, when Anna Bligh assumed the Arts portfolio for the second time, but this time as Premier (her first stint as Arts Minister coincided with her appointment as the Minister for Education and Training), has been a very active period of cultural policy and cultural strategy-making. This period has been marked by its turn away from ‘big-picture’ policy towards focused statements addressing specific policy issues. In some senses, this narrowing of focus can be read as a response to the overweening ambitions and failed efforts of the ‘cultural policy moment’.

The Reforms of the First Goss Government

The election of the first Goss government in December 1989 ushered in a period of reform across the public sector after 33 years of conservative government (see Walker 1995, pp. 145–64). In September 1990, Premier Wayne Goss — who was also Arts Minister — charged the Arts Committee, chaired by the former federal arts bureaucrat Pat Galvin, with reviewing government support of the arts. The committee’s report, *Queensland: A State for the Arts*, announced its own significance: ‘This Report is a first. No Queensland Government has ever before sought to examine in a public way the support it gives to the development of the arts.’ (Arts Committee 1991, p. 2)

The report acknowledges that in June 1968 Queensland was ‘the first state to set up an arts funding mechanism’ (1991, p. 2), but does not dwell on the direction of policy over the subsequent two decades of conservative government. It does, however, mark not only the transformation of the arts funding apparatus and its attendant policy regime under the Goss government, but also the transformation of policy-making processes. The new funding model was the Australia Council writ small (Glover and Cunningham 2003, p. 19). *Queensland: A State for the Arts* established a policy framework organised around the criterion of ‘artistic merit’ as a more inclusive version of the Australia Council’s highly problematic charter objective of supporting ‘excellence’ (Stevenson 2000, pp. 43–57). It introduced new ways of making policy organised around the Australia Council model of artist-based (or peer-based) policy and funding recommendations. These recommendations were then generally rubber-stamped by the Minister for the Arts. Policy officers and expert artform officers assisted the peers in forming advice to their minister. This brought a new transparency to the funding process. Over the next five years, the

implementation of the report transformed the arts industry of the state (Glover 2000b).

In some sense, the report was remedial in that it was as much about catching up as it was a discourse of Queensland's cultural marginalisation. If it transformed much, it also underlined how much more remained undone, particularly in relation to education and the arts, and the arts statutory authorities — the Queensland Museum, the Queensland Art Gallery, the State Library of Queensland and the (then) Queensland Performing Arts Trust. The statutory authorities were, and remain, the biggest expenditure commitments within the arts portfolio. Such was the Arts Committee's reforming zeal that the report suggested possible terms of reference for reviews of the statutory authorities.

This history underlines the seductions of 'joined-up policy'. Colebatch (2002, p. 9) suggests that, after 'instrumentality' and 'hierarchy', 'coherence' is the third assumption about social order that underwrites all policy activity. In this instance, it gave rise to the Arts Committee's wish for a policy regime that extended across the breadth of the government's statutory cultural agencies. Coherent policy was needed not just for the programs that funded artists and arts organisations outside government (such as dance companies, not-for-profit galleries and writers) but also for the statutory authorities.

Beyond the commitment of Labor governments to cultural planning, and the interest of Coalition governments in partial deregulation, there were several other clear drivers of change within the Queensland government cultural bureaucracy. Some of these were common to governments in Western democracies through the 1990s: the making of generic policy across artform areas (or delivery areas) as part of an emphasis on cost and process efficiencies within cultural policy bureaux (Glover 1995; Stevenson 2000, pp. 65–66); the focus on cost efficiencies, collaborations and contracted outputs and outcomes within the subvented industries (perhaps as part of the rise of ideologies and practices of managerialism, corporatism and privatisation) (Browning 2000); and the rise of the consultant as an agent in policy formation (Saint-Martin 1999, pp. 82–97).

The report and reforms were also in keeping with the growing interest in the arts and cultural policy. Goss's assumption of the Arts portfolio followed Premier Mike Ahern's same manoeuvre in the dying days of the National Party government. The Brisbane City Council had already established a cultural policy capacity under Lord Mayor Sallyanne Atkinson — although it was later to expand dramatically under Lord Mayor Jim Soorley. The Institute for Cultural Policy Studies at Griffith University had spent much of the 1980s involved in discussion about the possibilities of cultural policy and cultural policy studies as domains for political and reformative action.

Despite contiguities with activity elsewhere, much of the drive for policy change was particular to Queensland's administrative developments. To provide a history of recent Queensland cultural policy is also to provide something of a history of the government in the state. The invention of Queensland cultural policy is, in a significant way, a product of the wider process of inventing modern government in Queensland. The wider reforms of government — often driven by contributors from the academic sector — were as significant as the specific recommendations of the *Queensland: A State for the Arts* report. It may well have been the contributions

of policy scholars and activists such as Peter Coaldrake, Glyn Davis and John Wanna that made the most significant contributions to reform of the public administration of culture. For example, Coaldrake's reforms of public-sector management and Davis's systematisation of policy development processes introduced modern government to the state. Perhaps the introduction of a planning culture and the development of the bureaucratic skill base within the Queensland public service did as much as the identification and pursuit of particular cultural policy objectives to transform cultural policy, programs and outcomes.

In the 1990s, Queensland was an active cultural policy space that existed in a variety of relations to federal policy-making. The 1991 *Queensland: A State for the Arts* report operated as a policy framework to bring Queensland up to existing 'best practice' within the national mix. The introduction of large-scale funding for writing, visual arts, individual artists (focusing on a notion of professional practice), the introduction of peer assessment and the operation, for a period, of quasi-arm's length decision-making mimicked the Australia Council. In part, this was an attempt to address a lingering perception of the failure of the Australia Council to operate with a truly national brief, and meet developmental needs in Queensland. The Queensland Arts Division's preference for 'artistic merit' as its guiding principle over the Australia Council's narrower notion of 'excellence' combined — uneasily — a concern for quality with strong social justice and equity provisions. This had mixed results. On the one hand, it directed resources towards Indigenous cultural development for the first time. On the other hand, the introduction of a host of equity and social justice considerations into the criteria for artistic merit left Arts Queensland open to attack by the high arts community and by the enemies of (perceived) political correctness. This came to a head in 1995 when Arts Queensland fell for a literary hoax and funded a writer of English and Irish background, Helen Darville, in the belief that she was Helen Demidenko, of Ukrainian origin (Bentley 1995).

In other ways, the agency was ahead of the game. Cultural planning and policy articulation by local government were also used to transformative effect (Stevenson 2000, pp. 108–14). The Regional Arts Development Fund was an innovative partnership with local government to subsidise local cultural activity. Local government was responsible for granting decisions, but in order to participate in the scheme local government authorities had to develop a cultural policy. The program was later replicated by the federal government (Stevenson 2000, pp. 115–16). This process of leveraging cultural policy development for local government across the entire state was itself perhaps one of the Goss government's signal achievements, although local government policies were highly variable in quality and still are. Arts Queensland did not audit quality in this process, and in some instances mandating local policies prevented participation that, had it been allowed, might have fast-tracked understanding of the value of arts and culture in local communities.

The Rise of the Queensland Cultural Policy Moment

In the wake of the Arts Review, the preparation of *Creative Nation* by the Keating government from a discussion paper in 1992 to its final publication in 1994 brought new policy responses from the states. Arts Victoria's *Arts 21* policy state-

ment was released in 1994. The Queensland government updated its policy position in 1995 (under the newly appointed Arts Minister, Matt Foley) with the release of *Building Local — Going Global*. These state government frameworks absorbed the federal policy focus on new media. But in a departure from *Creative Nation*, they also began to make policy statements about regional and city identities and brands. Arts Queensland, driven partly by the policy momentum established earlier in the decade, but also partly by the rush of cultural policy-making that was happening in other states and at other levels of government, continued to undertake considerable cultural policy work. Much of this was specific to particular sectors rather than over-arching. Some of it was announced publicly, including the 1995 *Hidden Heritage* report on community museums, which re-jigged the funding relationship between the Queensland Museum and community museums, and encouraged a planning base for community museum development. Less visible to industry and the public were a series of internal policy processes prepared by Arts Queensland and the portfolio agencies, including the 1995 restructure of public library funding arrangements and levels.

The Borbidge Government, 1996–98

During the Borbidge National-Liberal government's short interregnum (1996–98) in the Labor hegemony, Treasurer and Minister of the Arts Joan Sheldon gutted and restructured Arts Queensland, removing much of its senior management, including Executive Director Greg Andrews. Sheldon announced some new initiatives — a \$250 million plan for extensions to the Queensland Cultural Centre, the purchase of the Empire Furniture Building, which later (under Labor Arts Minister Matt Foley) became the Judith Wright Centre — while other long-established processes came to fruition, including the first Queensland youth cultural policy that had commenced under the previous government. These initiatives, like the document *A Queensland Arts and Cultural Policy*, which she released in 1997, were significant for their 'bricks and mortar' focus, which addressed a perceived crisis in arts accommodation. In other significant developments, Sheldon dismantled the artform-specific policy structure and staffing within Arts Queensland, and also in 1997 folded Film Queensland into the Pacific Film and Television Commission. While these changes to generic rather than artform-specific policy and delivery were in keeping with policy reform elsewhere in the country, they denuded Arts Queensland of artform expertise and the ability to develop policy that responded to the differing needs of individual arts practices.

The Fall of the Queensland Cultural Policy Moment

Foley's second stint as Arts Minister (from July 1998) brought with it a major, but rather isolated, electoral-platform initiative to establish a policy for public art. *Arts Built In* was, however, a major initiative that demanded cooperation across the whole of government. Otherwise, Foley remained publicly committed to the *Building Local — Going Global* policy that he had launched 1995 before the fall of the third Goss government, although much of what remained of the 1995 policy statement seemed redundant five years on. In the meantime, a range of other policy imperatives had arisen, including new funding protocols with local

government in relation to the Regional Arts Development Fund and public libraries and, prompted by federal developments, the need to respond to National Competition Policy. Generally, there was pressure from the arts industry — both on funding levels and the policy paradigm — and this led to a review of Arts Queensland's granting programs for arts organisations and individual artists.

Among senior staff within Arts Queensland, there was concern that the portfolio lacked a focus and mechanism for cultural policy development and funding. Accordingly, in January 2000, after some cajoling from Arts Queensland staff, Minister Foley wrote to the responsible officers within each of the statutory instrumentalities of his portfolio requesting their cooperation in the formation of a new state arts and cultural policy. The new policy required horizontal coverage of 'all Queensland Government departments and inclusi[on] of all Queenslanders' (Foley 2000). This whole-of-government cultural policy was not only to be a new kind of policy (and policy document), but required new processes of policy formation.

Perhaps the most important driver was the need to have public commitments by government to arts developments over the coming period. The workings of the executive demanded that agencies could respond to the government's new operational framework that was driven by seven stated priorities, and later by the 'Smart State' agenda. Arts Queensland and the State Library of Queensland were anxious to secure new funds. It was hoped that a policy statement, with ministerial, Cabinet and eventually Budget Cabinet endorsement, might provide the necessary leverage to secure funds through the new Budget Cabinet bidding process.

Due to the whole-of-government focus, it was apparent from the outset that the new policy process would involve players outside Arts Queensland. An audit of cultural policy activity across government revealed it to be extensive. Some departments — such as the Department of Premier and the Department of State Development — were more significant than others, but it was becoming possible to think of cultural development as a policy interest of the whole of government. Further impetus for such an approach was provided by the operating structures of the first Beattie government. 'Joined-up policy' was encouraged. All initiatives had to report against the seven priorities, while the development of a new heads of government mechanism brought together Directors-General into cross-portfolio working groups. All Cabinet briefing papers were required to indicate whether they were a whole-of-government submission. Often policy or Cabinet submissions would need to respond to, or contextualise themselves in relation to, a series of cross-departmental policy plans such as the Communication and IT Framework, the state government Innovation Plan and the Smart State Plan (although it was yet to take on the centrality it assumed in the second term of the Beattie government). Likewise, all policy initiatives needed to conform to the state government community service arrangements and the federal government competition policy.

Following industry consultation, by May 2000 the proposed new policy statement was in a long draft of more than 30,000 words. At every opportunity, we erred on the side of keeping material in the document. Accordingly, it became clear that the draft policy, while comprehensive, lacked a focus. My own conception of it was as a cultural policy framework for the whole of the state government for the coming five years. It would concentrate on cultural policy in three realms: Arts Queensland; the arts instrumentalities; and other departments

(particularly the cultural initiatives undertaken by the Department of Premier and the Department of State Development).

In order to do this, I articulated for myself a series of goals for the document. It needed to provide the philosophical underpinnings for a new arts and cultural policy; discuss the cultural significance of ‘community’ in the context of the arts; outline expansion plans for the arts infrastructure throughout Queensland; advance ideas for increased employment in the arts and cultural industries; explore the development of new audiences and markets; address contemporary issues of technology, globalisation and culture commodification; promote a whole-of-government approach to the arts and cultural industries; address social justice and equity concerns associated with cultural diversity; and present examples of current and new arts and cultural practices.

In many senses, this document was the product of a cultural policy scholar seeking to reflect on ‘culture’ as a governmentalising category, rather than a cultural policy worker seeking to be definitive about a small number of government initiatives. The document was then explicit about how I imagined it might be useful:

This document outlines a framework for arts and cultural development in Queensland over the next five years. It will assist government departments and agencies in the allocation of resources and decision-making through the identification of clear objectives, priorities and strategies for development. This document supports the State Government’s seven priorities. It makes clear how arts and cultural development contribute not just to a ‘better quality of life’, but to a number of other government priorities including ‘More Jobs for Queenslanders’, ‘Building Queensland’s Regions’, ‘Building Queensland — the Smart State’, and ‘Safer and More Supportive Communities’.

This framework tries to differentiate between the many objectives that direct government’s engagement with arts and culture. It seems too simplistic to say that we know that the arts are ‘good for us’; it seems important to try to describe how they contribute to our community and make our lives better. A concrete articulation of how we believe the community will benefit from an investment in cultural development will allow for greater harmony between the Government’s cultural agenda and its other key policy frameworks.

Even in its earliest drafts, the policy statement clearly was concerned with its own status, going so far as to make statements about the usefulness of policy statements within government. In its concern with the processes and utility of policy, it had much less to say about programs or initiatives, but five key strategies are identified:

- building strong communities and supporting diversity
- building the creative industries and the cultural economy
- developing audiences and telling Queensland’s stories
- delivering to the world, and
- a new role for government.

While the second aim of building the creative industries and the cultural economy was an addition to the existing Australian arts policy discourse, it is the

articulation of a new role for government that is most radical here. The document explicitly suggested a series of actions to enable Arts Queensland to reposition itself inside government. These were to: develop an ongoing policy cycle; position Arts Queensland as a lead agency for cultural policy development; establish a mechanism for joint policy planning across the arts portfolio; adopt a whole-of-government approach to policy-making and program delivery; use arts and cultural strategies to deliver on social and economic policy agendas; centralise some cultural policy functions and project; maintain and develop mechanisms and peer assessment; establish long-term strategic relationships with the Commonwealth and local government; investigate new vehicles for arts and cultural investment; investigate partnerships between industry, community and government; and develop appropriate performance measures for the cultural industries.

In its other aims, the document was unsurprising enough. The chapter 'Building Diverse and Vibrant Communities', for example, re-presented elements that, while important to the minister, had largely been part of the government cultural agenda since 1991: building better public places; investing in our heritage; developing our young people; supporting festivals for community and economic development; building Indigenous cultural industries; skilling young Indigenous people; providing access for every Indigenous community in Queensland; developing public libraries as providers of access to lifelong learning; developing library services in Indigenous communities; building a new library for a growing state; developing a strategy for the state's museums; planning for cultural diversity; planning for art and disability services; simplifying access to arts and cultural funding and investment; providing statewide support for arts and cultural activity; and planning for statewide cultural development.

The policy document went through several drafts during the first half of 2000. By August 2000, partly out frustration with the task and partly out of competing commitments, I had removed myself from the process and handed the drafting over to Gillian Gardener. By November 2000, the policy document was abandoned. Significantly, from May 2000 the working drafts had begun to be used as internal discussion documents within government. Thus the document had a continued policy utility. The discussions that gave rise to my policy draft/discussion paper, the document itself and the discussions subsequent about to the development of the document helped organise future policy statements and structural adjustments by government. In this case, a 'failed' policy process, and its intermediate outcomes, through the churn of policy work assisted government towards an eventual policy statement and a new form of governmental organisation.

After the re-election of the Beattie government in January 2001, Arts Queensland was constituted as a stand-alone department for the first time with its own Director-General. This, and the pressure of unmet industry expectations, gave impetus to the reconstitution of the policy process. Under the leadership of Arts Queensland's senior executive and strategy officer, Donna McDonald, a further policy process was commenced with the earlier policy documents as a starting point. By early 2002, the document was in substantial draft and had received in-principle endorsement from the statutory arts bodies, most Queensland government agencies and the community arts sector. This new draft differed from

the previous version in that it leaned towards brevity rather than comprehensiveness.

McDonald and her team saw this document — with its concise statement of policy intent and cascading series of initiatives based around a suite of organising principles — as a working tool for public servants rather than as a scholarly analysis of cultural policy possibilities. At the same time, they saw the drafting of this cultural policy as an opportunity for Arts Queensland to demonstrate its own creativity by writing the text and designing the document as a cultural policy narrative rather than as a conventional bureaucratic statement. However, as had become endemic in this policy process, and for unclear reasons, McDonald was removed from the drafting task around this time — making her the fourth officer to leave or be removed from the project. She was replaced by yet another Arts Queensland officer, Bret Mannison.

The eventual policy, *Creative Queensland*, released in October 2002, sought to extend two ideas the earlier process did much to mobilise: a whole-of-government approach to culture and a broader operant definition of culture. It is important not to view these as ideas merely existing ‘textually’ in the earlier policy draft of *Building the Future*, but instead to see them as ideas that had begun to adhere themselves to the cultural policy mechanism of government. They had begun to be deployed in internal policy discussions and in program design before finding an eventual home in a published policy text of 2002.

In one sense, the failed *Building the Future* policy exercise represents the high point of the Queensland cultural policy moment. The Australian Key Centre for Culture and Media Policy (the successor to the Centre for Cultural Policy Studies) was still active across Brisbane’s three universities and the dream of the potential of cultural policy was at its most vivid within government. As stated above, the impulse to broaden the scope of cultural policy activity was evident from the state government’s earliest cultural policy-making efforts. In 1990, the Arts Committee sought to reach beyond its initial terms of reference to pursue a wider reform agenda. But the 2000 policy exercise was characterised by over-reaching hopes for the potential of cultural policy to remake the field of culture and for the potential of government to represent and order its overall cultural activity.

A number of factors underpinned these somewhat hubristic ambitions. As Tom O’Regan (2001, 2002) observes, the rise of whole-of-government approaches to cultural policy and development were, in part, produced out of a transformational broadening of the operant definition of culture within government. Once the domain of culture is broadened to include the culture of everyday life, governments might logically pursue a whole-of-government approach in the place of long-persisting policy silos. The work of academic cultural studies was imported directly into government. This effect may have been somewhat exaggerated in Queensland due to the influence of the Australian Key Centre for Culture and Media Policy.

At the same time, as O’Regan observes, whole-of-government approaches to policy are also produced out of the conditions and fashions of government. For Western governments, this meant a paradoxical concern with, on one hand, order, totality and consistency, but on the other, deconstructing existing mechanisms of public administration. Whole-of-governmentalism requires a horizontal purview of government goals, programs, outputs, processes, politics and outcomes, alongside

— and perhaps in tension with — the long-standing vertical purview that is fundamental to ministerial responsibility.

Whatever the cause, this development had downstream effects for policy-makers. The definition of culture as ‘everyday life’, while defensible, is an unwieldy container for administrative activity. Transforming cultural policy into a domain incorporating much social policy and significant elements of economic policy makes the domain titanicly large. Potentially, it compromises concurrent government efforts to order activity through the division or apportionment of responsibility (Glover and Cunningham 2003, p. 19). While whole-of-government cultural policy-making completes an ideological wish for the ablation of ‘high’ and ‘low’ definitions of culture — and a concomitant erosion of traditional aesthetic arguments for arts funding — it has profound implications for policy processes. While, at a federal government level, DCITA (as the federal arts department was known at the time) and its 20 or so component instrumentalities constituted a sizeable department, most state government arts agencies are small and suffer for their size. Often they are modestly sized line agencies or sideline concerns within a chief minister’s portfolio. This marginality often limits an agency’s ability to act across government.

In Queensland, such issues led to problems in coordinating cultural policy and cultural program activity across government. No matter how expansive the ambitions of the cultural bureau (the whole-of-government impulse), there were limits to the abilities of a small, and characteristically politically weak, cultural policy agency to achieve its ambitions. At the time, Arts Queensland had just 40 or so staff to fulfil both program and policy functions, in addition to servicing the burdensome daily briefing and reporting demands of the minister and Director-General. This limited the ideas base and skill-base of the organisation. More immediately, the modest scale of the agency circumscribed its policy capacity and its capacity to develop new programs and modes of delivery.

In 2000, as the cultural development agenda rippled horizontally across government, Arts Queensland was not well placed to provide expert input or advice. This horizontal expansion presented an opportunity to steer new resources into cultural development across the state. Yet Arts Queensland, rather than being driven by a policy vision, was unable to provide advice except reactively. The agency’s marginalisation inside the Department of Attorney-General and Justice, its scale, its limited networks within government and its difficulty in speaking the language of the rest of government all counted against it. The situation was worse for some of the instrumentalities within the Arts portfolio. The Queensland Museum, the (then) Queensland Performing Arts Trust and the State Library of Queensland (which had clear policy protocols with local government in relation to public library provision) were isolated within state government. On the positive side, the 2000–02 Queensland cultural policy process can be viewed as part of the churn of policy-making, and led to unexpected positive results, including the integration of cultural policy within a range of other government activities, such as the Community Renewal Program. Again policy churn helped organise resources and discussion within government, creating a space for negotiation of policy issues, even if it did not eventually result in a clear set of goals or a clear public rhetoric.

After 2004: More Modest Aims, More Consultation and Clearer Strategy

Cultural policy work did not end after the failed policy attempt of 2000; there have been several major statements in the ten years since. However, policy work resumed on a scale that was more realistic for a small agency. The ambitions of the cultural policy moment retreated: cultural policy studies — which had been fashionable and well funded within Australian universities — vanished almost overnight in the early 2000s as a coherent sub-discipline of cultural studies. Instead, after 2004, Queensland cultural policy-making is marked by a retreat from the top-down cultural policy-making that marked the 1990s (and particularly the Keating period). Instead, the state government and Arts Queensland within it have been much more focused in their cultural policy activity. Much of it now can be characterised as articulation of strategy rather than headline policy statements. And much of it is now produced out of ongoing relationships between government and its client base, rather than by political or bureaucratic fiat.

In 2004, Rod Welford was appointed Minister for Education and the Arts. He oversaw the initiation and completion of building works for the major redevelopment of the State Library of Queensland and the building of the Gallery of Modern Art in 2006. Little policy emerged in this first term, except perhaps *Creative Writing — Queensland Writing Strategy 2004–2006*, which focused on support for new modes of writing and publishing, business skills development and increased partnerships between writers and their communities. Welford was active as Education and Arts Minister at the national level on the Ministerial Council for Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs (MCEETYA) and the Cultural Ministers Council (CMC), signing the *National Education and the Arts Statement 2007* and declaring 2009 the Year of Creativity in schools. Under Welford, 2006 saw the development of the *Queensland Arts Industry Sector Plan 2007–2009* led by long-term senior Beattie executive Jenny Menzies. One plan was published for each artform segment: dance and music; theatre, writing and new media; visual arts, craft and design; and creative communities. A major focus of this was to re-establish the credibility of Arts Queensland within the sector, and to re-establish credibility within government after the internal review and restructuring of Arts Queensland in 2006. The restructure saw the reinstatement of a focus on artforms with new, informed and experienced staff with specific artform knowledge and experience.

The sector plan presented a contracted and more realistic ambition than that articulated in *Creative Queensland*. It was explicitly not a new cultural policy, but rather an intermediate strategic planning framework that sought to identify areas of excellence and potential opportunities. It sought first to distil the huge ambition that the sector articulated throughout the extensive consultation conducted in the development of the plan, and second to set an achievable set of actions for the three years. It articulated its policy context within national policies, specifically Arts Queensland's relationship with the Australia Council and the review culture of the Howard government (Nugent 1999; Myer 2002; Strong 2005). It identified its other key policy contexts as the Queensland government 'Smart State' policy and three specific policies of the then Queensland Department of State Development: Trade Driving Export Growth for Queensland 2006–2011,

the Creative Industries Strategy and the work of the Queensland Indigenous Arts Marketing and Export Agency (QIAMEA). Key themes were promoting a diverse, dynamic and creative culture, strengthening partnerships and collaborations, and capitalising on Queensland's unique strengths and characteristics, with priorities around flexible funding models, regional infrastructure, audience development, international touring and export, support for Indigenous cultures in Queensland, and the viability and growth of the arts sector.

This first sector plan signalled a new commitment to evidence-led policy, ongoing consultation and dialogue with the sector to build the case for the value of the arts. It signalled a desire to move away from the rhetoric of 'special pleading' of previous policies. Following immediately on from this came a major review and reform of funding the small to medium arts sector, which saw a number of long-term organisations defunded and new ones subsidised for the first time.

Several specific strategies were published during the period covered by the first sector plan, such as the new and revised public art policy, *art+place 2007–2009*, which replaced Matt Foley's mandatory whole-of-government percent for art policy *Art Built-in 1999–2007*; an update of the youth policy in *arts, culture+me: Children and Young People in the Arts Action Plan 2008–11*; and the whole-of-government *Design Strategy 2020* led by Arts Queensland, which presented the first four-year action plan 2008–12.

In 2009, the Labor government was returned with Anna Bligh as Premier, and the arts became — as they had been in the initial Goss years — part of the Department of Premier and Cabinet. The Bligh government launched *Towards Q2: Tomorrow's Queensland* to replace the Beattie government's *Smart State*. Q2 essentially was framed around the same basic platforms of strong, green, smart, healthy and fair, and although the arts were in Bligh's own portfolio, they did not feature explicitly in the document. An active and personally engaged Arts Minister, Bligh has overseen major developments including, most notably, significant development in the Indigenous arts sector through the success of the Backing Indigenous Arts Program and the much-lauded annual Cairns Indigenous Art Fair.

Since 2009, Arts Queensland has been prolific in launching a series of artform-specific strategies — *Press Play: Arts Queensland Contemporary Music Strategy 2009–2012* and *Coming to a Place Near You: Touring Strategy for Performing Arts in Queensland 2009–2011*, the result of a major review and shakeup of performing arts touring in Queensland. The first *Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Strategy 2009–10* and *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Policy 2010–2011* were launched, as was Arts Queensland's first regional arts strategy, *Artbeat: Regional Arts and Cultural Strategy 2010–2011*. This was followed immediately in February 2010 by the second *Queensland Arts and Cultural Sector Plan 2010–13*.

The first sector plan was thoroughly evaluated (in line with Arts Queensland's commitment to building evaluation capacity itself and in the sector) to inform the subsequent and current Queensland Arts and Cultural Sector Plan 2010–13 (2009). What marks the current sector plan as different is that it signals a far greater sophistication than the initial intermediate plan in its understanding of the

role of government in the complex ecology of the arts and culture, particularly in building the resilience and sustainability of the state's arts and cultural ecology. Couched in an environmental rhetoric, the 2010–13 sector plan, perhaps for the first time, focuses realistically on how the government can partner the different parts of the cultural sector for the cultural, social and economic benefit of Queensland. The aims and objectives are to 'strengthen the whole ecology, as well as support those parts that show great potential to boost the State's cultural profile, while strengthening regional, national, and global networks' (2009, p. 6).

This shift in thinking mirrors a broader shift, observed by Geoff Mulgan (2010) in 'The Birth of the Relational State', that outlines a move from the idea of a delivery state to a relational one: the idea that governments can better succeed by directly addressing the quality of their relations with the public rather than doing so indirectly through promises and their delivery. New approaches to addressing particularly intractable issues depend upon the nature of relations that the state maintains rather than the services it provides. A government organised around relationships — acting with others rather than just doing things to or for them — starts to take on a very different character. In this thinking, the government recognises that it needs to focus as much on coalitions in which it will not always be the dominant player. The 2010–13 sector plan signals a more collaborative approach to securing the sector's future, and it articulates a shared vision of the sector and government: 'It provides an opportunity for the arts and cultural sector to speak with a common voice to other industries, to government, and to the community about the significant contribution it makes to the lives of Queenslanders.' (2009, p. 8)

Relations between the government and its client base are being cemented further by the revolution brought about by Web 2.0 and Web 3.0 on and within government. Arts Queensland's Facebook page and digital blog increasingly are becoming sites to share, discuss, contest and build coalitions around policy approaches, strategies and funding with the intention of addressing some of the more intractable issues faced by the arts and cultural sectors. This is the way of the future, of course, for all government. Arts Queensland's approach to its unpublished Digital Strategy exemplifies this. Despite deciding not to publish a strategy at all, this is nevertheless emerging as a conversation and ongoing dialogue for sharing evaluative practice: discussing and exploring the ever-changing cultural field. The policy focus is increasingly about evidencing value through the recognition of broad-based participation. There is a seeming end to top-down approaches to cultural policy as well as top-down approaches to the making of art. These challenges are changing irrevocably the nature of arts and cultural policy.

Conclusion

The Queensland government arts programs under the final National Party governments of the 1980s included elements that we might now see as quaint, not least a ballroom dancing program. In the 20 years since the election of the Goss Labor government in December 1989, much has changed. While there might be space still for government funding of community activity such as ballroom dancing, there is space for much else besides. Arts Queensland, in all its several

administrative forms and ministerial homes, has played a significant role in cultural change in the state. But the way it has operated has also changed over time.

Throughout the five stages of the recent history of cultural policy-making in Queensland, we can witness the impact of Australian and international policy movements. Yet Queensland remains a distinct cultural polity. Initially, much of the cultural policy-making in the state was marked by its remedial quality — a statist approach to building cultural infrastructure and institutions that were considered lacking. This seemed to be both produced out of and underline aspects of Queensland's cultural separatism and sense of difference. Later, the presence of the Institute for Cultural Policy Studies and its successor, the Australian Key Centre for Cultural and Media Policy, at Griffith University provided an international focus for cultural policy scholarship in Queensland. And it also seemed to bring Queensland government cultural policy-making into lockstep with the cultural policy moment and other ideas, including whole-of-government cultural policy-making. Some of the policy frameworks, such as the *Art Built In* public art policy, were genuine innovations and transformed their sectors. Other policy efforts, such as the draft *Building the Future* framework, withered on the vine. More recently, the state has focused on more specific policy and strategy statements. It has sought to replace policy rhetoric with policy relationships. While Queensland may not lead the nation in terms of arts output or impact, it can argue for a continuing contribution to cultural policy-making.

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